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ABSTRACT

A study guide developed to help foreign language students learn languages more effectively and efficiently provides specific suggestions for developing study habits to complement the teacher's instructions. An introductory section gives general remarks on studying another language, including both general study suggestions and the recommendation to practice out loud. Subsequent sections address practicing pronunciation and intonation, developing listening comprehension skills, developing speaking skills, developing reading skills, doing grammar exercises, learning vocabulary, using the language laboratory, using audiovisual aids (videotape, films, and slide programs), text analysis, and developing skills in translation. In some sections, study suggestions are specifically sequenced. A list of references is appended. (MSE)

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A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

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TO THE STUDENT

This Study Guide has been developed to help you learn a second language more effectively and more efficiently. It deals with an area in which you may not have received specific instruction, namely the study skills required to deal successfully with the task of learning a new language. When your instructor asks you to "study the vocabulary" or to "read the next five pages for tomorrow"—how do you go about doing these assignments in the most economical and effective manner? We have tried to avoid very general statements such as "study hard," "review your assignment several times" in favor of concrete advice.

While eventual success in studying another language is a function of many factors (such as aptitude, attitude, and perseverance) and cannot be predicted accurately for each individual student, and while each student has his or her own preferred manner of studying, we believe that there is a **core of study habits which appears to guarantee success for the majority of students; some of these techniques may work for you.** Even if you find certain items that don't work for you, their rejection may well give you some ideas for other techniques which would benefit you.

And yet a note of caution: Take the following remarks as *suggestions.* Your instructor's advice on procedures to be used in the course must take precedence if there should happen to be a conflict between them. He or she will know best how to achieve optimum results with a given learning objective and a given textbook.

Do not try to read the entire Guide at one sitting, but refer to each section as study skills are required for a certain assignment. Start with the first section (*General Remarks on Studying Another Language*) and try to implement these suggestions in your study habits from the very beginning. Go over it a number of times and think about the implications for your course of study. Proceed with the other sections—one at a time—at a later date.

GENERAL REMARKS ON STUDYING ANOTHER LANGUAGE

(1) **You cannot learn to speak a language by only thinking about it:** in addition to knowing the rules governing language usage you have to *listen,* to *imitate,* to *memorize,* to *practice.*

(2) **Study out loud.** In reading silently, you use only your visual memory; if you study out loud you double your efficiency by adding auditory memory; then, by adding motor memory, you at least quadruple your study efficiency, because motor memory is the most efficient of all (Moulton, 1952).

(3) **Divide the material and your study time into small units.** Your attention span and your memory span are likely to decrease drastically after about half an hour. So break up your study time into 20- to 30-minute blocks; turn to other homework and return to the foreign language later.

(4) **Don't fall behind.** Even though steady, day-by-day work is the best way to learn any subject, it is true that in many courses you can get yourself out of a jam by some high-pressure, last-minute cramming. Not so with a foreign language, especially when the objective is conversational fluency. Cramming for an oral exam would be about as sensible as cramming for a swimming test.

(5) **Review is extremely valuable.** In the long run, the learning process boils down to a constant process of learning, forgetting a bit, relearning, forgetting a little bit less, and then relearning again and again until the learned material has become second nature. Quite often, a little extra review of the dialogue or the exercises is all a person needs to catch up with the rest of the class. You will be happy to know that memories apparently lost are more easily recovered with each new attempt (Moulton, 1952).

But the review should require recall *and* production; rereading and relistening are not enough. True/false or multiple-choice items, answering questions, changing a narrative into a play or vice versa, writing short skits reviewing the plot of the story, or rewriting or interpreting the gist of an essay, writing a sketch, a biography, a description of a situation—these are only a few of the techniques that should be used to make learning more permanent.

(6) **Attend classes regularly, even if you can't come prepared.** Simply tell your instructor that you couldn't prepare for the class, and he or she will not call on you. Learn as much as you can from the classroom work. If you miss a class, you will have to catch up later, and if you have missed two or three classes in a row it can be highly frustrating to come to class because you may no longer understand what is going on—which means that you are likely to miss the next class, and so on.

Moreover, coming to class is important because **your instructor has designed class activities which you cannot do on your own;** yes, you can study the dialogue, the exercises, and the vocabulary on your own (especially if you work with a tape), but your instructor wants you to put it all together in a free, communicative context: in open-ended questions and answers, in skits, in role play—in short, in situations where you make *creative use* of the foreign language to express your very own feelings.

(7) **Pay attention to the critical features of what you are practicing.** When you practice the contrast between lip-rounded and unrounded vowels, for example, conscious attention to their distribution and their articulation will make the association between concept and realization much easier. When doing a grammatical exercise, pay attention to the *significant features* and *rehearse the principle* while doing the exercise (Carroll, 1965).

(8) If you want to speak the language, practice speaking it; if you want to be able to translate it, practice translating; *don't expect any magical transfer* from one language skill to another. You can only do well what you have practiced.

(9) **Always try to relate new learnings to established learnings in your mind by focusing on similarities and contrasts.** For example, "in German, two-part verbs are separated from each other; a modal auxiliary construction is a two-part verb, therefore: . . . ;" or: "in German, the verb in the subordinate clause is . . ., while in English it is to be found . . . ."

(10) **Make sure that you practice successfully contrasts between sounds or structures which may be readily confused.** This will sharpen your discriminative skills and will allow you to verify more efficiently your hypotheses about the workings of the foreign language (Carroll, 1965).

(11) **The more meaningful an item is to you, the greater is the likelihood of efficient learning and long retention.** "Meaningful" means, for example, that you understand grammatical terminology, that you are able to relate a foreign language phenomenon to its equivalent in English; that you learn vocabulary couched in its natural context; that the topic under discussion is of personal interest to you; that you can see facts in their relationship to the structure of the whole concept (NEA, 1975).

(12) **Getting more than one explanation of a phenomenon and/or different points of view from various sources** is more effective than reading and rereading the same explanation over and over again.

(13) **Silently verbalizing a rule, a concept, or a word can be an effective means** for transferring an item from short-term to long-term memory; but *verbalizing* it *aloud* is even more effective.

(14) **You tend to remember newly learned material for a longer period of time if you know that you can use it correctly.** Doubt and insecurity are great facilitators of forgetting. It is important, therefore, that you get as much feedback as quickly as possible on what you are saying or writing. Tapes in the language laboratory, of course, provide immediate feedback and therefore are extremely useful for learning the sounds and structures of a foreign language.

(15) **When you practice the second language, don't be satisfied if you can do the manipulative drills correctly—they are only a stepping stone.** You should be content only when you can use new vocabulary, new structures, new sounds *on demand, in a spontaneous manner, in a communicative situation.*

(16) **Be sure to develop and maintain a positive attitude** toward studying the other language, culture, and members of the other culture; it is important to feel good while studying the language, and that also means having a positive attitude toward the learning process, the other members of the class, and the instructor.

Motivation and perseverance can be provided by knowing that the foreign language will be useful in getting ahead in a job later on; that you can travel in the target culture and really understand the people (i.e., you can think, speak, and behave like a native of the target culture). But of course, some aspect of the foreign language or culture may be of special intellectual interest to you, such as social institutions, literature, political history, etc. *The better defined your motivation, the greater will be your desire to learn the other language (and your achievement).*

For some students, learning a foreign language represents a means to stepping out beyond their personal horizon and to understanding their own values better by understanding, accepting, or rejecting values represented by another culture.

(17) **Set yourself appropriate immediate and concrete objectives** as well as long-term goals, and obtain evidence of progress and attainment of goals. Any subject is best studied by breaking the learning material into small, manageable components for which feedback on study success can be easily obtained. This is especially true of second language study, where each small step must, of necessity, build on the one preceding it. Vague, wishful resolutions without clear-cut objectives can only increase the frustration experienced by many beginning language students.

(18) **Thoroughly learn important facts and skills.** One of the great wastes of study time results from stopping before the facts are fixed in your mind. Don't tell yourself that you will study that concept "some more" later on.

(19) **If your knowledge of English grammar is somewhat shaky, study the glossary in your textbook** or ask your instructor for help in understanding grammatical concepts (Morris, 1973). Most courses require you to know what terms such as *tense, mood, declension, transitiveness,* etc. mean. Make sure that you know whether a certain concept, such as "present perfect," exists in English and in the target language and what the differences are—if any—in function and applicability.

(20) Finally—and this is perhaps the most important advice of all—**try to think in the other language from the very beginning.** Don't try to find word-for-word equivalence between English and the new language; rather than imposing the patterns of our native language onto the unknown language, thereby setting up a stimulus-response bond *between* the two linguistic systems, we should endeavor to establish such associational bonds *within* the new language system where an idea or a word automatically calls forth the correct next word in its correct structural form. Rather than having to "look for words" or to figure out the correct ending, we should aim for the ability to respond spontaneously, without thinking. This is one reason why it is so important to hear/read/speak/write the intellectually comprehended rule as it is realized in natural sentences: the more often we have actually made the association between, let us say, the third person plural ending of the verb with

the correct personal pronoun, the more we move away from the conscious selection of the linguistic form to the point where the correct form comes to mind naturally.

Clearly, there is a role for the conscious selection process and for translation (although not for literal translation): advanced language courses will concentrate on those very areas where the possibility of error arises because of near-identity of form or usage in the two language systems; they will also encourage you to consciously select certain words or structures because of the special effect they have on the listener or reader.

It is also clear that thinking in the other language is a skill which must be refined and perfected as theoretical competence in the new linguistic system grows, but it is quite possible to function in the other language after a few weeks of instruction within the constraints of well known situations, speech intentions, words, phrases, and structures. Many students report a "threshold experience" when, all of a sudden, "it came together" for them and they did not need to translate anymore—an exhilarating experience which rewards long periods of frustration.

PRACTICING PRONUNCIATION AND INTONTATION

The more exposure you get to the foreign language as it is spoken by a variety of native speakers, the greater is the likelihood of correct recognition of sounds. Especially in the beginning, you will have to train your ear to become sensitive to intonation contours and vowel variants in order to be able to produce the correct segmentation of a stream of sounds into meaningful units with a minimum of effort. You will have to be able to distinguish between sounds which seem very much alike or between words which sound the same but mean different things, and if you can *discriminate correctly* between certain foreign language sounds, and between specific foreign language and English sounds, you will have established a basis for *correct production* of the foreign language vowels and consonants.

In order to be able to produce the foreign language sounds and intonation contours correctly, you will have to have **a knowledge of the regularity of their occurrence and a model to imitate** as well as a knowledge of the correct *manner of producing* them. Feedback by your instructor and your classmates (as well as by self-evaluation of taped utterances) will enable you to gradually approximate the ideal.

Be careful to **avoid possible interference** from English when learning the correct foreign language pronunciation: the same letters in the two languages may be pronounced differently. Errors, when repeatedly practiced without corrective feedback, tend to be very difficult to eliminate. *Consistent work with tapes under supervision* is therefore desirable.

(1) When studying material which was previously presented and practiced in class, you should **listen to a tape of the assigned portion first without looking at the written text.** Try to understand every word; if necessary, stop the tape and relisten; if you still cannot make sense of it, open the book and ascertain spelling and/or meaning and function. Throughout, try to fix the sound image in your mind by silent repetition of the word or sentence. If you have to have the book open, try to work with it as little as possible.

(2) Next, **replay the tape, stopping it and repeating after each sentence. Then read along in your book on the third playing and underline the word(s) in the text which gave you trouble in the repetition phase.** Practice these words/phrases/sentences again and again until your recording approximates the master.

(3) If the material to be studied is a continuous text, read it onto the tape and then **listen to it critically,** noting difficulties and practicing these items.

(4) **Do the relevant supporting exercises** in the book and ask yourself questions about the text, paying special attention to difficulties which you encountered previously. Interrupt your foreign language homework for a short time and return to it later.

If these steps sound laborious and time-consuming, you will want to know that an initial investment in acquiring good pronunciation habits in the first six weeks will, in most cases, practically guarantee your having no difficulties with that aspect of the foreign language later on in the year.

The more opportunities you have to listen to and produce the new sounds, the greater is the likelihood that you will acquire good pronunciation. In most cases, listening by itself does not lead to acceptable pronunciation, although **careful listening and silent rehearsing** while others speak can also be useful. At any rate, observe very closely the way your instructor or other native speakers form the foreign language sounds. If you experience particular difficulty with a certain sound, check in your textbook for a description of *how to articulate it* (e.g. lip rounding, tongue position, voicing).

DEVELOPING THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL

Listening comprehension refers to the skill of segmenting a stream of sounds into meaningful units and wholes by:

(1) recognizing sounds and discriminating between them;
(2) organizing sounds into units which carry grammatical meaning (e.g., tense) and conceptual meaning (semantic content);

(3) relating the various units to each other and understanding the relevant sociocultural and emotional connotations; and
(4) relating the message received to prior knowledge and integrating it with previous experiences.

In our view, *attention should be given to listening comprehension as a separate skill* because (1) chances are better that, after having completed a second language course, you will hear the language spoken more often than you will use it; and (2) improving skill in listening comprehension should accelerate the growth of the oral skills. The following section contains suggestions on how to systematically improve your listening comprehension skill. Your instructor will probably use a number of them in your course, and will gradually reduce the number of such semantic supports until you are able to understand the acoustic form by itself.

(1) This is probably the most effective approach: **Work with programs which provide you with as many clues to meaning in as many media as possible** and listen several times while withdrawing these additional supports one at a time until you can understand every word without visual or written support. Your instructor can tell you if such multisensory programs (e.g., tapes accompanied by slides or a filmstrip and a text) are available for your course.

(2) In a first-year course, proceed in a highly analytical manner. **Identify troublesome sounds** (which your instructor can list for you) in a minimal pair (two words which differ by one sound) and in contrast with English sounds. Identify these sounds/intonation contours in a natural text (at this stage stay with textbook recordings which are usually recorded more slowly and clearly than colloquial speech would be). **Train yourself to guess ahead** by expecting certain words in their assigned places in a sentence (if this is possible in the language you are studying) and **listen for structural signals** (for example, identify the actor and the verb only; identify time, place, and manner in adverbial and prepositional phrases; identify person endings on verbs; identify tense changes only). At this stage do not stop the tape, but pick the required signals out of the flow of the text; if necessary, listen to the text again to achieve this end. **Try to understand an entire sentence without having to analyze the structural signals.** You may use the beginning dialogues and other texts of many different textbooks so that you have enough easy material with which to practice (ask your instructor for recommended books); check your comprehension quickly by means of true/false and multiple-choice statements where they are available. Use the context to guess at the meanings of as many individual words as possible—think along with the logic of a conversation or a running text.

(3) **Distinguish between extensive and intensive listening,** that is, listening for the purpose of getting the gist of the messages (by listening to very short and simple stories and plays), and listening for shades of meaning (for example, at crucial scenes in radio plays, poetry, lectures). Check with friends and/or your instructor if necessary to get the meaning right.

(4) With new texts, **slow down the tape, stop it after a difficult phrase or sentence,** and become clear in your mind as to what is being communicated. Be sure to listen to the entire unit of meaning, because you must learn to understand a message at the first try, and it is a good work habit to force yourself to do so from the very beginning.

(5) **Practice increasing your capacity to hold a foreign language message in your memory.** Do this, for example, by repeating to yourself longer and longer segments of a sentence.

(6) **Get used to different speakers, different accents, different speeds.** Listen not only to studio recordings, but also to recordings of natural language. Find out about dialect variations and vocabulary selection from your instructor.

(7) The ultimate test is your ability to **understand a conversation between native speakers;** if taped, it should not have been recorded especially for a language course. It will contain background noise, fast speech, ungrammaticalities, incomplete sentences, allusions, puns, and the like. Practice the language by using it on the phone with a friend—a real challenge!

(8) In an intermediate course, **listen to short stories and lectures on items of cultural interest without trying to understand every single word.** Then summarize in your own words what you have understood.

The following strategy might be adopted to increase listening comprehension:

A. *Introductory treatment of the text by the instructor*
The instructor sets the scene by asking questions and presenting information in which concepts and vocabulary contained in the text are presented. You will then study the key vocabulary.
B. *Listening to the text*
(1) First listening attempt:
a. Define/paraphrase/explicate the title of the passage.
b. Answer global questions: What is the basic message/problem presented by the text?
c. Note all references in the text to:
•persons, numbers, dates, and places;
•all words which occurred in the title or which are implied in the title;
•all negated references and all emphasized references occurring in adverbial and prepositional phrases.
(2) *Second listening attempt:*
a. Confirm accuracy of previously noted detailed references.

b. Answer detailed (memory recall) questions.
c. Where applicable, answer multiple-choice and true/false questions.

(3) *Third listening attempt:*
a. Answer questions which require explanations of phenomena mentioned or described in the text.
b. Answer questions which require evaluation of statements made in the text.

C. *Integration and follow-up*
(1) Summarize the text in your own words, integrating as many responses to the above questions as possible into the narrative.
(2) Point out the features which contribute to the text being an effective/ineffective means of communication of the basic message; suggest improvements in the argumentation where applicable.
(3) Where possible, relate issues to your own life/experience/expectations and discuss the text in that light.
(4) Add to and delete from the list of key vocabulary (including phrases) as required by your presentation.

DEVELOPING THE SPEAKING SKILL

Being able to respond to or initiate utterances is the most difficult skill of all, because it involves both memory and application (remembering words, their pronunciation, their form, their relationship to each other, their emotional connotation, etc.), while simultaneously thinking of what to say.

This is why foreign language practice is designed to *proceed in small and controlled steps,* from the elementary stage of being able to associate sounds with meaning while listening to a speaker, to simple repetition or changes in given sentences, to reformulation of given contexts by paraphrases, to adding new components to the given situation, finally arriving at the point where you select the content as well as the shape of the utterance.

The first few weeks may appear to be extremely slow and mechanical, but do not forget that you are *laying the groundwork* for the more sophisticated, liberated steps later on. Don't tell yourself that you "know that stuff anyhow" and forego the practice. Experience has shown an extremely high correlation between success after the first six weeks or so and achievement later on, all the way into the second and third year of language study.

Do not be too inventive in the initial months in your conversations and paragraphs—use the grammar and the words you know. If you look up (or ask for) too many words and use new constructions you will get bogged down in frustrating struggles with the language; moreover, you are bound to make a lot of mistakes, some of which will be hard to correct.

But don't be too timid, either. Your fellow classmates are going through the same process, and the instructor certainly knows the kinds of difficulties with which you are dealing. Always push yourself to the limit of your capabilities—try out new words and structures when you prepare yourself for speaking practice.

Your instructor and your textbook will have many suggestions for situations in which to practice the second language, from use in small groups in the class to various foreign language clubs or the community, where this is possible. For many, practice in real-life situations is by far the most satisfying (and therefore productive) experience in learning to speak another language.

As a stepping stone, most courses provide manipulative practice of structures with or without visual aids and controlled or guided use on a somewhat higher level; some of these exercises may be done in the language laboratory (A separate section of this guide deals with work in the language laboratory). What follows are suggestions on how to prepare for the more creative exercises, skits, or dialogues which your instructor may require you to do.

The overall learning objective in practically all modern second language courses is to enable you to make yourself understood. The aim, therefore, is *communicative competence* in the second language, which is the ability to convey meaning by the conscious and deliberate use of linguistic and extralinguistic features of the language which are appropriate in a given communication situation.

These *linguistic features* include grammar, pronunciation, and intonation plus *gestural* and *other nonverbal means of communication.* Of course, when we speak to another person we do not think in such terms: we have a meaning in mind, a *speech intention,* which we want to put into language. These basic speech intentions may be filled with different explicit content according to what we want to transmit in meaning, and may be expressed in many different ways.

In your preparations for a skit or a conversation, you might want to jot down the line of conversational exchange, the kinds of information to be exchanged, and the manner or emotional overtones which accompany such an exchange. Next, think of the linguistic requirements for putting the various speech intentions into the other language: that means going through your textbook and finding those places where phrases and passages exemplify the way a speaker of the other language might want to express himself or herself in a given situation. This basic catalogue will, in most cases, have to be supplemented by linguistic information from dictionaries, phrase books, and the like. The results at this stage would be an *outline of key concepts and their linguistic realization in key words and key phrases.* Under no circumstances should you write out the entire dialogue for memorization.

You might then find it useful to *play through the dialogue situation* with a friend so that the theoretical constructs are actually put into the spoken foreign language and so that faults in the logic or the flow of the conversation can be discovered before actual performance in class. Some will find it helpful to simulate the conversation in the language lab by playing both parts and recording this performance on tape, following which you would listen carefully for pronunciation and grammar errors and would rerecord an improved version. Actually doing the conversation will produce many more imaginative statements than merely thinking about what you would say, and therefore it would be very useful indeed if you could get together with a classmate to practice the conversation topics. In any case, do not rely on being able to be too creative at the actual delivery: "Faking one's way through" at the elementary and intermediate stages usually leads to disaster.

DEVELOPING THE READING SKILL[1]

The *goal* you are aiming for is the **ability to read a book in another language and understand what it is all about.** You will never reach this goal by doing only word-for-word translation.

The cardinal rule to remember is this: **Never look up a word in the vocabulary until you have read the immediate context in which it occurs.** There is no way of knowing just how far you have to read to get the immediate context: it will vary from case to case.

Let us assume that you've read through a paragraph before getting lost. Go back to the beginning and read along until you come to the first word you cannot reasonably guess. Underline the word; look it up in the chapter vocabulary or a dictionary, find the English meaning that fits the sentence; put a pencil dot in the vocabulary margin beside the word (to show you have looked it up once); and then, turning back to the text, reread the phrase in which the word occurs, trying to fix the meaning as you do so. Go through the first paragraph in this way, only looking up the words you absolutely must and making intelligent guesses at the others. Then tackle the following paragraphs in the same way. After a short break, reread the pages you have just done. The whole section is still fresh in your memory, and a second reading now will really tie down loose ends.

Aside from words that you don't know, there are two other difficulties you may encounter: first, there are the *idioms*, groups of words that mean more than the sum of their parts. Handle these just as you do single words: underline them, look them up in the vocabulary, and put a pencil dot beside them. Second, despite all the help that a vocabulary gives you there will be passages which you just cannot understand. *Do not waste time on them.* If you cannot understand a passage the first time through, put a vertical line in the margin beside it and read ahead. Quite often you will pick up a clue later on, and the difficulty will be cleared up when you do the rereading.

The above method, besides helping you read efficiently, carries with it a number of interesting by-products: the underlines automatically furnish you with a list of the words and idioms you had to look up; and the single vertical lines in the margin show you which passages caused trouble in the first reading, and/or which you should ask about. All this is extremely useful for reviewing later on. But perhaps most important are the dots you put in the vocabulary margin each time you look up a word. Every reader has a personal set of nuisance words that he or she just can't seem to remember and which he or she has to look up again and again. The dots in the vocabulary margin will furnish you with a list of your own nuisance words. After you have read 50 or so pages in the book, run through the vocabulary and make a list of the words that have more than three dots beside them. There will not be many of them, and if you spend a little extra time on them, you will save yourself a lot of useless vocabulary thumbing later on.

When it comes to the *actual reading*, proceed as follows: As English speakers, we obviously want to find the subject of a sentence first, then the verb and its object and modifiers. So do just that. As you read along, identify the subject; then spot the verb and get the whole verb phrase; with that much out of the way, the rest usually falls into line without too much trouble, especially if you ask yourself the questions referring to direct objects, indirect objects, place, manner, time, etc.

Making educated guesses about the meaning of words and phrases is an indispensable tool for efficient reading. First you must determine what grammatical function an unfamiliar word fulfills. Learn to read the signals for nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on. Once you have pinned down the word grammatically, think about the total setting. Try to determine what would logically fit. Finally, read the previous sentence and the one with which you are working. You may have to try several times before you come up with an appropriate meaning, but in the long run it pays to use your brain instead of the dictionary.

If you do use a dictionary (and for intensive reading of a passage you should verify your guesses with the help of a good mono- or bilingual dictionary), be sure to read all the way to the end of an entry just as you would do if you looked up an English word: try to fit a meaning into the sentence you are working on. Even if it seems to fit, check out the other meanings listed in the dictionary.

Another technique in learning to read another language is to **look for cognates**, that is, pairs of words in English and the second language that are closely related because of their historical background. However, here you have to be careful, because words that look the same may not have the same meaning in the two languages. Your instructor

can give you many examples of such misleading similarities.

Finally, it helps to know the most important processes of *word formation* in the other language in order to be able to guess at meanings of words intelligently; there are many regular and systematic ways in which adjectives are derived from nouns or verbs, in the way verbs may be used in a multiplicity of meanings by the addition of prefixes and suffixes. Studying vocabulary in the form of word families is an effective means of increasing your vocabulary.

Many instructors recommend the *SQ4R* (or a similar method) for reading and studying texts with content of a factual and technical nature. You probably already use this method when you read textbooks in math, history, philosophy, or art history. Very briefly, it consists of the following steps.

(1) *Survey:* determine the structure, organization, or plan of a chapter or section of text (details will be remembered because of their relationship to the total):

- think about the significance and meaning of the title;
- where possible, read the introduction: it will give you valuable clues as to the major themes in the book or essay;
- where it has been provided, read the chapter summary and note the key concepts;
- read all main headings and chapter titles.

(2) *Questions:* by asking yourself certain questions before the actual reading of the text you will formulate expectations and hypotheses which will be confirmed or rejected during the reading process; they will also heighten interest and create more active involvement:

- use questions at the beginning or end of a chapter to focus your attention on main themes; and
- formulate your own questions about the content, e.g., by turning chapter headings into questions;

Stop briefly at this point and try to answer these questions yourself: you will be surprised to see how much you already know.

(3) *Read* the text using, for example, the method outlined at the beginning of this section of this Guide.

(4) *Recite* (aloud) the answers to the questions you asked yourself.

(5) *Write* out the questions and answers.

(6) *Review* all questions and answers immediately, upon completion of Step 5, by reading and recitation. Review the sheet with questions and answers one week later (Smith, 1961).

[1]This section is based, to a large extent, on William G. Moulton, "Study hints for language students," *The Modern Language Journal,* 36(1952), 259-64.

DOING GRAMMAR EXERCISES

Learning a language means acquiring the speech habits of its native speakers. Like other habits, speech habits follow certain patterns, and grammar is nothing but the analysis of these patterns.

Grammarians have devised certain terms for linguistic phenomena. The knowledge of these terms is by no means indispensable, but it can prove to be a great help, for it enables you to understand grammar rules more quickly and more easily.

Knowledge of grammar therefore simply means knowledge of how the foreign language is put together; knowledge of rules does not mean that you will know the language (in the sense of being able to use it spontaneously), but it will make it easier for you to acquire the basis of speech habits: without rules you would have to listen to or read a large number of utterances, decide what they have in common, arrive at a hypothesis for a generalization, test it out—a rather laborious process. Knowledge of grammar rules therefore is not an end in itself: *rules* merely *represent tools* with which to analyze and produce forms in the foreign language. Foreign language practice implies the conscious application of rules in carefully controlled contexts—always, of course, aiming for spontaneous language use as the ultimate objective.

The following procedure might prove useful:

(1) Study a new exercise to **find out what the structural item to be learned is,** and verbalize the contexts where it appears (e.g., specify where a certain noun ending seems to appear and where it does not).

(2) **Organize your conclusions** in a pattern or paradigm.

(3) **Verify your hypothesis** by checking it against the grammar summary at the end of the chapter or in the appendix, where available, and correct wrong generalizations.

(4) **Study the new exercise again** and observe the workings of the generalization.

(5) Go through the new dialogue or the new reading selection, and **check the text for occurrences of the structural item in question; analyze the pattern.**

At this point, you should have a complete understanding of the applicability of the generalization which you are unlikely to forget. The important thing here is to *be absolutely clear* in your mind *about the workings of the rule.* If you are at all uncertain or slightly confused, then do spend extra time doing the above steps again, or ask your instructor or a friend to help you understand the principle. The more varied explanations you hear, the more likely you are to understand and remember.

(6) Turn to the exercises and **translate the cognitive understanding into the beginnings of automatic use.** While you are doing the repetitions, transformations, or substitutions, be aware of the structural principle involved. Never simply parrot an utterance—an absolute waste of time. Attaching labels to the exercises is a good means of focusing attention on critical features.

(7) **Practice the rule in less and less tightly controlled situations.** Think of new contexts in which you could use the newly learned rule and practice it. The real test of your control over the item is being able to respond to or initiate an utterance in which the new items can be produced correctly and spontaneously.

A major difficulty with grammar is that many students have little formal training in the analysis of their mother tongue, and therefore the new terminology is an added burden which may contribute to their frustration. Be sure that you understand the labels which have been attached to linguistic regularities: they are supposed to categorize events and facilitate your understanding and production of language forms. In most cases it will be true that you will be unable to produce a structure correctly on demand if you don't know what a grammatical term signifies. Be sure to ask your instructor for clarification of grammatical terminology if the textbook does not satisfactorily provide it.

LEARNING VOCABULARY

You must *avoid memorizing disconnected words* as the sole means of acquiring a large vocabulary. In addition to the fact that such learning is extremely difficult and is inefficient because of the high rate of forgetting involved (try to memorize a page from the telephone directory!) there is also the linguistic consideration that words may mean different things in different contexts—words and phrases take on their real meanings only when viewed in their proper setting.

Furthermore, special characteristics of constructions required by certain words are also best remembered in a *meaningful sentence* taken from a *meaningful context.* It is important for you to study dialogues and reading selections intensively because they provide the meaningful linguistic context for the vocabulary to be learned.

When reading a text with a view to learning the vocabulary, three general hints are in order:

(1) Never look a word up until you have *read the whole context* in which it occurs—at least an entire sentence.
(2) Don't be afraid of *making intelligent guesses.*
(3) Make a special *list of "nuisance words"*—the ones you find yourself looking up over and over again, and memorize them.

Going beyond these hints, there are other ways to build a vocabulary (Rivers, Dell'Orto and Dell'Orto, 1975):

(1) **Focusing on form.** You can multiply your knowledge of vocabulary through recognition of related forms (e.g., nouns derived from verbs or through affixation of prefixes and suffixes).

(2) **Focusing on meaning.** Practice words and phrases by paraphrasing the givens, and by finding synonyms and antonyms.

(3) **Expanding by association.** We tend to recall words best through meaningful associational bonds, that is, by relating them to other words which belong to the same sphere of meaning (for example, all the words belonging to the situation "driving a car"). It is for this reason that learning vocabulary in context is much more valuable than learning isolated words.

In any case, it is very important that you *recirculate vocabulary* once acquired: people tend to forget newly learned words rapidly if they do not encounter them again for a long while. Games (Scrabble, crossword puzzles, word associations), in addition to formal review of previously learned words and their conscious use in new contexts, will help you to remember your foreign language vocabulary. This is why it is important to take your time in preparing skits and conversations, and in writing essays and paragraphs.

Memorizing

Organize your information by some kind of a system: impose a pattern on the various bits of information to be memorized, and you are halfway to having memorized it.

When it comes to memorizing vocabulary (remember: learning in context *is* more effective!) proceed in a manner similar to this:

(1) Read the foreign language word aloud, then the English word, then the foreign language word again; try to find a pattern of some kind to establish a linkage between the two.

(2) Proceed to the next pair and treat it in the same manner; return to the first pair and read it out loud.

(3) Go to the third pair and do as before; review the first two words.

(4) Read the fourth pair and review pairs 2 and 3. From then on, always review the two pairs immediately preceding the ones you are learning.

(5) Do no more than 10 pairs like this. Cover up one side of your list and, going back to the beginning, try to recall the English eqivalent of word 10, then of word 9, and so on. If you cannot recall a word, look it up and put a dot next to it. After doing the first pair, reread those pairs having dots next to them.

(6) Cover up the other side of the list and try to recall the foreign language equivalents (including gender as applicable) of the English words. Use the same method as before.

(7) Cover up one side of the list and pick out words at random; put a dot next to the words which you cannot recall. Study these words again.

(8) At this point you should not have any difficulty recalling all words correctly.

(9) Take a break; return to the next section of vocabulary later. Be sure to review all sections at the very end of your study period, especially the ones which gave you trouble before. Review this vocabulary later in the day and again for at least the next two days.

(10) Practice these words in context by forming sentences of your own, by responding to questions, by doing the relevant exercises in the book or on tape, or by writing out sentences containing the new words.

A few more hints:

(1) If you must learn a list of items you are better off if you study *beyond* the point where you can recall the complete list without error. If you can continue to practice after this point, it will affect how much of the material you will be able to recall later.

Remember: *You start to forget what you have learned almost immediately*, and the rate of forgetting is highest in the first few hours: within eight hours 60 percent of what has been learned may already be forgotten; subsequently, the rate of forgetting slows down (Vogel, 1977). You should continue to practice each item at least three times beyond the first correct response or association, that you review it again after twenty minutes, after one week, and at one-week intervals thereafter.

(2) Four 15-minute intervals of study will probably enable better recall of the material than a one-hour study session.

(3) You are most apt to retain material if you go to sleep immediately after learning it. There are no intervening activities to interfere with consolidation and, therefore, retention (Locke, 1975).

If you are fortunate enough to be enrolled in a course that clearly specifies the vocabulary for which you will be responsible, you can devote your entire attention to studying it for recognition and production. If this is not the case, however (and most intermediate and advanced language courses do not make provision for vocabulary lists), the following hints might be useful in deciding which words should be learned and which can be ignored without great loss:

(1) **Determine the meaning of new words** as described in the section on Developing the Reading Skill.

(2) **Write an outline of the story** which describes the plot, the characters, the setting, and the theme; *find the words* which you need for this purpose in the text and *underline them* so that you will remember the context in which they are used. *Study these words* as described in the section on Learning Vocabulary.

(3) **Reconstruct plot, character, setting, and theme from memory**; use your outline as a support for vocabulary recall; put a dot next to those words which you didn't remember and memorize them in the context in which they are to be used.

(4) **Ask yourself questions** (or get someone to do this for you) about the factual details of the text; if you can answer them without much hesitation you have probably acquired all the significant words which you should know.

(5) **Mark down noun gender, verb forms,** etc., either in a list of those words which you needed to recount the events and characters or, even better, in the margins next to the context in which the words occurred. Be sure to return to your text at each step in higher-level analysis (interpretation): it contains the words and phrases—and therefore the ideas—which you will need to understand and use in your interpretation of the text. At any rate, be sure that you are able to recall the second-language words on demand; do not be satisfied with merely recognizing them.

USING THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY

In itself, the language lab can do nothing, and no miracles can be expected simply from studying there. It can, however, be used effectively for certain aspects of language learning, and it offers a number of distinct advantages. For example:

(1) **The machine presents authentic, native-like speech** without tiring and becoming impatient. It therefore provides an excellent model of pronunciation which you should imitate.

(2) **The language lab provides immediate correction and confirmation** of your responses; this is a feature which is especially useful for unsupervised lab practice.

(3) With the machine, **you may devote as much time as you wish to practice.**

(4) **The machine permits up to 100 percent individual participation** by giving you, in a sense, your own room with a private electronic tutor. The laboratory also provides you with psychological isolation, which may release you from some of your inhibitions about making foreign language sounds in front of the rest of the class.

(5) **The machine takes care of a great amount of the oral repetition drill** necessary for the mastery of the language. This saves valuable class time and relieves the teacher of much of the routine work, thus permitting him or her to do more creative work in class. It is also possible for a teacher to individually correct and coach without disturbing the other students. You can hear and use the foreign language throughout the lab session instead of waiting for your turn, as you do in the usual classroom situation (Mackey, 1967).

Following are suggestions as to how to approach studying in the lab; these learning strategies have been evaluated by students as being useful, and they characterize the study habits of those who received high marks in their second language course. Some of these strategies may also work for you.

In general, the study behavior of successful students in the language laboratory appears to be characterized by *keeping in mind the grammatical principle* while practicing, by *analyzing the context in which words appear,* by transferring sentence patterns into the *active communication repertoire,* by *practicing aloud* rather than reading along silently or giving responses sub-vocally, and by *practicing until near-perfection* or perfection is achieved.

Some specific learning strategies which discriminate between successful and unsuccessful learners are:

- carefully studying new texts before listening to the re cording;
- picking out key words and phrases in conversations and other passages and repeating them;
- for answers to lab questions, thinking of key words around which you can build your response;
- paying special attention to the way words or phrases are being used in putting coversations together;
- in four-phase drills, repeating aloud the confirming master response: the second repetition seems to fix the correct response better in your mind;
- making a mental note of the words which you do not understand during the first listening attempt and then looking them up before listening to the tape a second time.

For *specific practice activities* in the language laboratory please refer to the sections on Developing the Listening and Speaking Skills, Practicing Pronunciation and Intonation, and Doing Grammar Exercises. As a general principle, all activities in the language laboratory should be characterized by an active, critical approach to practice; do not merely substitute, transform, expand, and contract sentences without being keenly aware of what you are doing and of the effect of the grammatical operation on sentence meaning.

USING VIDEOTAPE, FILM, AND SLIDE PROGRAMS

Depending on the objective, *visual material may be employed for two purposes:* (1) extracting visual information and cultural content for its own sake, and (2) using visual information as a cue for the elicitation of oral production, with the optional acquisition of the content presented. Sound may support either method of study.

Video and film programs

There are three types of video and film programs: instructional programs, documentary, newsreel and cultural programs, and action or feature films.

(1) **Instructional programs.** There are a number of programs which add a visual dimension to a textbook or which may be used by themselves, having the characteristics of a package of learning episodes with dialogues, reports, interviews and, occasionally, provision for oral and written exercises. Ask your instructor if there are such programs available for your course level.

In addition to following the instructions accompanying such a program, this approach might be adopted:

1. **Watch the entire segment without stopping the videotape** to get an overall impression of the content. Jot down key concepts. Record the segment on audiotape while watching it.

2. **Rewind and replay the videotape, stopping and relistening where required.** Guess at the meaning of the unfamiliar words from the total context (use verbal and visual cues); if the unknown word/phrase appears to be of central importance, jot it down and look it up. Expand your outline with the words which transmit significant content. Note uses of words and phrases in unusual situations so that you can associate them later with the context in which they were used. Write down words/phrases/sentences which you understood, but with which you were not too familiar.

3. Turn to the audiotape and **practice pronunciation and intonation** following the model, stopping the tape for pauses, and replaying it where required. At the end of this phase you should be able to imitate the master voices. You will also have rehearsed new words and new or less familiar constructions. If your program offers exercises for pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary practice, do them at this point.

4. **Play the videotape again, but this time without sound.** Using the actors' lip movements as cues, try to add the dialogue. If you cannot remember the lines, quickly switch on the audiotrack and switch it off again when you can produce the dialogue (sometimes turning the audiotrack on so low that you can barely hear it is a good strategy). Try to imitate the emotional overtones required for the dialogue. After another attempt at recreating the dialogue your effort should be quite satisfactory; record this second

version. Listen to yourself and edit the recording subvocally or by rerecording, correcting pronunciation and grammar errors at the same time. Insert vocabulary more appropriate to the situation than you might have been able to think of in your first recording.

5. **Sit back and enjoy a replay of the video and audio portions, noting nuances in gestures, inflection, background, culturally determined behavioral differences, differences in furniture, equipment,** etc. At this point you should be able to "step into the picture" and perform almost as well as the original actors. Be critical while watching and listening; correct any overacting which they might have done (this is often the case in instructional programs).

Documentary, newsreel, and cultural video programs and films.

In addition to offering the obvious benefit of presenting cultural information (sometimes on an explicitly contrastive basis), these films and video programs offer opportunities for language practice in the following manner:

•They are always descriptive, which means that there is often a close congruence between word and picture. *They are therefore an excellent source for the presentation of new vocabulary,* general as well as technical. View the film once to get an idea of the most important concepts, and in a second viewing jot down these words, particularly the ones which have a visual backup. Study them and group them in word families. Then view the film again and quickly enumerate words as objects and actions come into view. At this stage, do not try to organize them into complete sentences. Furthermore, do not take down all the new words at one viewing session—this can be a very frustrating experience. Consolidate your knowledge of new technical words by writing or reading a short summary of the film or video program.

•These programs frequently lend themselves very well to *grammar practice* involving relationships (e.g. prepositions, cases, where applicable, comparisons), substitutions, descriptions of quality, and the use of the present tense, for example. Suggestions will vary with the language studied, and your instructor will be able to help you there.

•A most useful culminating exercise would be to *write/record your own soundtrack for the film/video program.* Verbalize your evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation.

•In cases where the spoken word presents cultural information which is difficult to put into the visual mode, *decide for yourself why certain shots were chosen by the director/producer to accompany the narration.*

•If your instructor has provided you with a sheet containing true/false or multiple-choice sets of questions on content presented, do them: they will reinforce your knowledge of technical vocabulary in addition to sharpening your understanding of the cultural information presented.

Evaluate your responses. Evaluate the content presented in terms of (1) your own values, (2) contemporary society's values, and (3) where applicable, from the point of view of the culture which the film program is intended to reflect. Look for stereotypes, wrong generalizations, etc., if the program was not produced in the foreign culture, but in your own by people who might not have known all the relevant facts.

•If your personal reaction to a film/video program is extremely negative or positive, *write* or *record a film review* in the foreign language.

Action or feature films

These are distinguished by the extra dimension of a plot which unfolds over the duration of the film. They may also incorporate features of the documentary and culture film. In addition to analysis of the film by character, plot, acting, the message or technical quality and so on, the action film may be used in a manner similar to that employed with instructional fims, particularly if your instructor can identify central segments on which you should work.

Moreover, because of the fact that an action proceeds through time, this type of film/video program lends itself readily to the following types of practice:

- •Discussion in past or future tense with flashbacks or flash-forwards;
- •Use of the subjunctive to speculate on unrealized opportunities in the past or future, or to report on what was said by the characters (indirect discourse).
- •Noting sentence transitions and the linguistic realizations of switches in mood by characters. Identify not only what is being said, but how it is being said. For example, how did the two people express their feelings for one another? Are there linguistically observable differences in attitude, strength of liking, differences in perceived sex roles, in upbringing, in socio-economic status? The idea here is to note how language is used in a quite specific context on a level that is higher than simply idiomatic. Jot down expressions which had particular impact on you.
- •Playing the role of one of the actors as a culminating activity. Imitate his or her voice, gestures, mannerisms; then reinterpret the role from a different perspective, e.g., being cool and composed instead of breaking down under stress. Overact deliberately while recording this effort on tape.

- •Rewriting scenes which did not satisfy you. Extrapolate about what happened before the film started, what will happen after its conclusion, what might have happened if he hadn't . . . .
- •Writing a film review for a local newspaper and another one for a sophisticated journal.
- •Recording a new text to accompany the picture or parts thereof which would result in an incongruence between audio and visual messages, to create an amusing production.
- •Use of as many suggestions from "Documentary and culture films" as are appropriate. As in all learning, be sure to take an active approach to a feature film: do not simply watch and listen—confront it, deal with it in a purposeful manner.

Slide Programs

Slide programs may include a sound component, and should be accompanied by a text. Check with the language lab librarian as to what is available for your course and interest.

Inasmuch as slide programs, by necessity, offer less information, they may be less rich in content; on the other hand, because the visual information was selected with greater care, there are fewer distractions from the basic message or pattern. They also allow for greater creativity in their use, as much information has to be provided by the viewer, and you therefore have more control over putting ideas and concepts into language.

For more detailed suggestions please refer to the section on Film and Video Programs.

TEXT ANALYSIS[1]

The most important prerequisite for dealing successfully with a text, be it a play, a short story, a magazine article, a poem, a newspaper editorial or a political manifesto, is to know it thoroughly. You should have an excellent **recall knowledge of the words and phrases used and of all the factual details.** With shorter texts you should have read the text three times before attempting a closer analysis as outlined below: at the first reading, you should **solve all linguistic problems** and try to become clear in your mind about the content in outline form; at the second reading, you should **order and relate individual events to one another in the development of the plot;** moreover, you should formulate and test hypotheses about themes to which the individual events and incidents could be assigned. The third reading should produce an **understanding of the major themes in their relationship to one another and of the relationship between themes and the linguistic form in which they are realized.**

There are many ways to *identify text characteristics.* They include attempts at describing, for example, the relationship between the text and the author's life (biographical interpretation) or the author's inner state (psychological or psychoanalytical interpretation). The effect of the text on the reader/listener can be studied, as can the way in which it reflects the spirit of the age or the socioeconomic conditions under which it was written.

The following sections outline some major lines of questioning which may offer more detailed insights into the meaning of a text. You can deal with a text from seven points of view, namely the plot, the characters, the theme, the setting, the internal structure, the author's role, and the linguistic realization. Depending on the text being studied, some of these aspects may not be applicable, and some will receive differing emphases. For example, the plot will be of lesser importance in most lyrical texts than in prose or drama, while questions regarding meter, verse, or rhyme will usually apply only to lyric poetry.

The questions in each of the sections below are intended to give you a base from which to treat the text.

(1) **The plot.** Several questions are of central importance here: What is happening? Why is it happening and what is its broader significance? How many main plots are there? How many secondary plots? How are they interconnected (e.g., by events, characters, time or place references)? How is the plot structured (e.g., by change of location, time, the characters, intervention of the author)? Is there an exposition which sets the scene and introduces the plot? How many climaxes are there in the plot? What causes the plot to unfold as it does? Is there a retardation in the way the plot unfolds? Are the climaxes unexpected or are the events foreshadowed? How is the dénouement brought about? How does the plot end? What happens after the conflict has been resolved? Is there suspense in the plot? How is it achieved (e.g., by the events as they develop, or does it exist between the characters and does it transfer to the reader)? How are the incidents arranged and related to develop the theme? What purpose does each episode serve in the development of the plot?

(2) **The characters.** How many main (and secondary) characters are there? What are their relationships to one another? Do they change in the course of events? Which personality characteristics do they exhibit? What is the background which might explain the way they think and act? What relationship do the main characters have to the development of the plot? Do these relationships change? What is the extent to which the action is determined by the main characters and by other external forces? Conversely, how does the action affect the characters? Are the characters fully developed or are they types, caricatures? Are they intended to be representative of a larger group or of an idea? Are they all good or all evil, or do they have mixed characteristics? Are there inconsistencies in their characterizations? Are they convincing, believable? Are

their actions convincingly motivated? Is there a consistency of thought and action as the plot unfolds? How do we find out about the characters (e.g. by their words, actions, thoughts, through others, through the narrator, the author)?

(3) **The theme.** What does the story mean in addition to what it tells? What do you see in the story regardless of what the author may have meant? Where did the author get the material, the theme? Did he change it at all? If so, why? What is the theme and its broader significance? What values are portrayed? Does the plot exist for its own sake or is it symbolic of a general human experience? Does the author attempt to recount an experience, an emotion? Is there one major theme or does the text vacillate between several themes? How are they interrelated? Is there a moral? If so, what is it? What can the story teach us that will be true for us, for our own actions?

(4) **The setting** refers to the locale and the time period in which the action takes place. Is the locale described in detail or is it left to the reader's imagination? How is the time period indicated to the reader? Are there incongruities and inconsistencies in the description? Is the theme limited to a specific time and place? Are the characters limited to a certain place or time by the way they are characterized or by the way they think and act?

(5) **The internal structure of the text.** What is the formal structure of the text (e.g. division into acts, scenes, strophes, chapters, paragraphs)—how do they begin and how do they end? Is there an identity between beginning and end? If there are several plots, how does the author achieve integration (e.g., by recurring motifs, symbols, messages, locations, a central figure)? How are time changes effected and described? Are the main components of the action loosely connected or do they interweave to achieve an integrated overall effect? Does the conclusion present a total resolution of conflict or does it leave questions open? How do the major structural units (e.g. dialogues, monologues, flashbacks, flash-forwards) relate to the overall development of the action? Are there actions which are significantly different from the context, and are they relatively independent (e.g., interspersed letters, diary notes, fairy tales, poems, quotations)? What is their function (e.g., didactic, moralizing, adding documentary evidence)? If there is a monologue, what is its function (e.g., to explain the background of incidents, to create a certain mood, to present the author's own ideas, or to show how the protagonist comes to a decision which moves the plot along)? Whom does the monologue address? Is there a free association pattern in which the first-person narrator interconnects episodes? Is there a comparative pattern in the plot where similar or contrasting episodes are related?

(6) **Linguistic realization.** What are the characteristics of the language used? Is there an unusual choice of words (e.g. archaisms, foreign words, dialectal influences)? What is the specific mixture of ideas, vocabulary, figures of speech and points of view which appears to be characteristic of the author? Is the stylistic effect conveyed old fashioned or modern, abstract or descriptive, simple or rich in similes, images, metaphors, personifications, and allusions? From which sphere of human activity and from which level of language use do these figures of speech derive? Are the thoughts organized in a series of coordinate statements (sequences of main clauses or subordinate clauses) or are some thoughts subordinated to other thoughts (one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses in a pattern)? Does the manner of expression change for the different characters in accordance with their intended personality and background? Does the style fit the content conveyed, the topic? How does the author use indirect and direct discourse, monologue, dialogue, and inner dialogue? Which forms of discourse dominate (e.g., description, conversation, report, reflection)? What is the dominant tone in the discourse? Is it earnest, witty, emotional, sober, sentimental, cool, melancholic, gay, ambivalent, nonchalant, melodramatic, comical, sarcastic, solemn, modest? If the above is the intended effect, what is its actual effect on the reader?

1. This section is based, to a large extent, on Wolfgang Ruttkowksi and Eberhard Reichmann (Eds.), *Das Studium der deutschen Literatur* (Philadelphia: National Carl Schurz Association, 1974), pp. 153-60, and on Eileen E. Sargent, Helen Huus and Oliver Andresen, *How to Read a Book* (Newark, Dela: International Reading Association, 1970), pp.16-30.

DEVELOPING SKILL IN TRANSLATION

To translate a text means to transfer meaning, without loss or addition, from one language to another. Meaning is conveyed, on a very basic level, by words, phrases, and structural signals such as endings, and by syntactic arrangements of elements within an utterance; in oral communication, meaning is also conveyed by features of pronunciation and intonation, by patterns of stress and pauses, and by facial expressions and gestures. But meaning is also contained in the choice of words, phrases, and structures, in the degree of refinement and complexity of utterances which reflect the author's self-perception as a writer or expectations of the readership or audience which he or she had in mind when composing the text. In short, a text consists of a network of units of meaning on which extra-verbal features have been imposed. It is the translator's task to transfer this complete system from one language to another in such a way that the readers/listeners in the two languages concerned receive the same cognitive content and have the same affective reactions to the text. This will mean specifically:

(1) **to transfer the concept to be conveyed literally** without change if it evokes the same reaction in the target language reader;

(2) **to add explanatory features** if the other language does not have an established, unified concept for it (e.g., American English: "football"; German: "amerikanischer Fussball"); or to leave the original and explain the content by a paraphrase in the translated text or in a footnote;

(3) **to substitute another concept** which sets off the same association of thoughts in the other language where the word translated literally would not (e.g., German: "Bratwurststand"; American English: "hamburger stand");

(4) **to create a new word** for the foreign concept if it doesn't already exist in the language;

(5) **to match technical expressions and idiomatic phrases** in the two languages;

(6) **to match non-technical words and phrases to the stylistic level** at which the text was written in the original;

(7) **to use the grammatical features appropriate to the language;**

(8) **to combine words and phrases in an arrangement of length and complexity** which is appropriate to the situation (e.g., to imitate style, as in differences between serious scientific reporting and tabloid journalism; or differences in expression when a subordinate talks to his superior or to his peers); and

(9) where appropriate **to select words whose phonetic form evokes the same feeling** in the reader as does the original (e.g. in poetry, for dramatic effects in speech).

You might use the following procedures in dealing with a text to be translated:

(1) Determine the intended target audience/readership;

(2) Determine the following characteristics:

- length of sentences, their structural complexity; number of subordinate clauses; verbal vs. nominal character;
- choice of loan words, technical jargon; colloquialisms; frequency coefficient of words used; vocabulary spread (number of different words per 100 words of text); unusual use of neologisms; antiquated words; descriptiveness; evocativeness; sound symbolisms, etc.
- overall impression of activeness vs. passiveness; process vs. state; explicitness or implicitness of expression of content; directness vs. indirectness; use of certain words, phrases, and structures to effect a certain reaction; deliberate provocativeness, aggressiveness, special use of tenses.

(3) Find a text in the other language which was written with the same audience and intent in mind and determine its characteristics;

(4) Read up on the concept dealt with in the text so that you will know all its intricacies, thereby enabling you to follow the logic in highly specialized texts. The better your understanding of the concept, the better your translation will be from the point of view of clarity of the presentation.

(5) Read the text to be translated several times to establish overall internal logic; then read each paragraph of the original several times and note what each sentence contributes to that unit of meaning. Where necessary, divide a line of thought into smaller sense units.

(6) Determine the foreign language equivalent of the kernel of meaning arrived at in (5) and add other expanding or restricting attributes contained in the original. Use your own collection of technical expressions and a technical dictionary which provides the foreign language words in context and/or with explanation of their distribution. Arrange units in accordance with the text characteristics previously established (e.g., sentence length, complexity, choice of non-technical vocabulary, stylistic level).

(7) Compare original and translated utterances which convey an entire sense unit and check to see if any information has been added or omitted.

(8) Check to see whether that paragraph would have the same emotional effect on the reader in the other language.

(9) Check for naturalness, fluency, and grammaticality in the other language.

(10) Continue this process with next kernel of meaning and proceed through steps (6)-(9).

(11) Check for transitions between sense units in terms of fluency, naturalness and logic.

(12) Proceed to the end of the text following steps (6) through (11).

(13) Where possible, put translation aside for several days; reread the translation and edit it as if it were an original text.

(14) Make a final comparative check of content and tone.

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